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APRIL 1990



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Reini

INSIDE THE WASHINGTON LOBBY

by
Laura Markowitz
and
Chai Feldblum

The Coalition that Gives us Clout

The heart of the elusive-sounding "AIDS Lobby" is NORA--a powerful coalition made up of 150 national organizations. While two of the coalition's groups are exclusively lesbian/gay organizations, NORA--the National Organizations Responding to AIDS--counts among its members such mainstream establishments as the American Medical Association, the American Psychological Association, the Parent-Teacher Association, and the Junior League. How did such a diverse coalition come into being around an issue as controversial as AIDS?

In the mid-1980s, it was clear to AIDS activists that the Congress might never come up with an adequate response to AIDS as long as it was perceived solely as a "gay disease"--and therefore as affecting people who had few advocates in Congress. At the same time, AIDS was spreading, both into other disenfranchised populations, like IV drug users, and into the population at large. Community-based service providers were the first to feel the effects of these changes as more and more of their clients began having physical, emotional, material, and legal problems as a result of having AIDS. These service providers needed more funding to meet the needs of this growing community. To get it, they had to lobby the federal government.

In 1986, the AIDS Action Council (AAC) and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force started a coalition to lobby on AIDS issues. Called, at that time, simply the "Second Monday" group, it began as a coalition of approximately 20 representatives from organizations representing the lesbian/gay community, disability community, substance-abusers providers, child welfare, and civil-rights communities. The diversity of the fledgling coalition proved to be an important part of its strength and continues to be a primary asset of NORA.

In 1987, the coalition was reinvigorated when new leadership took over the AAC, and AAC took on a greater role in providing logistical support for the coalition. The coalition was renamed "NORA" (giving it an interesting human identity) and was reorganized into a

Please see LOBBY on Page 20

PATLAR

Voice of Gay America
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This Month's Cover:

Our cover for this month is entitled: Jeff. The artist is Roy Reini. Anyone wishing to contact Mr. Reini should call (505) 243-2540 or write PO Box 27237, Albuquerque, NM 87125.

by Ralph H. Walker, Ed.D.



RALPH

and there is more...

What is a relationship? That seems a good question to ask myself as mine of almost twelve years with Patrick comes to an end, as he recently announced that he will be moving in with Jeff and that we are no longer lovers.

What indeed is my experience of that at this point? I know many things that I would immediately say it is not. It is not that gorgeous hunk in that magazine. It is not the steamy sex you saw in the video. It is not romantic vacations in Hawaii or the trip to London and Stonehenge. It is not moonlight and roses. It is not eternal bliss and happiness. Or, at least in this case, it was not. Although, over the years, my Pat has turned into a gorgeous hunk. The sex has sometimes been far better than anything he or I have ever seen on a video. And, our Hawaii time was romantic and sexy and wonderful, and London and Stonehenge were wondrous. And, most of all, there were times of complete bliss and many times and places and hours of sheer happiness.

And, there is more that it was--and is. It is a kind of learning and growing and changing for each of us--often in ways and directions we'd not expected or often not wanted. It was a chance to encounter my darkest recesses and deepest fears, as well as some of his, and with that, a chance to lay to rest some of the demons, but not all of them. It was an opportunity to learn that one cannot live someone else's life for them, nor can they for you. But you can learn to live with each other and you can learn that love and relationship is a hell of a lot more learning than it is being simply blissed out. And, if you are very lucky, you'll learn that you want to stay together, no matter what. I mean, you know, even after you know all of their hidden parts, and they know all of yours. I developed that willingness, over the years. As I see it, Pat did not quite make it to that willingness for "full disclosure." That is not a shortcoming or limitation on his part but rather, I suspect, that he is enough younger to think that perhaps--just per-

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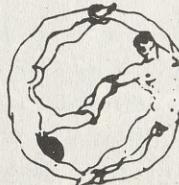
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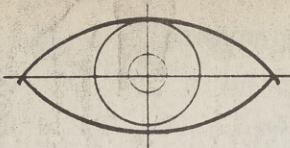


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HORNER'S CORNER

[Legal advice on various matters by one in the legal profession who deals with business and personal problems daily.]

OK. We've established that there are some of us out there who don't have a mattress stuffed with cash, who are employed by someone else, and who desire to start our own businesses with a minimum (less than \$150) of capital outlay and with no desire to go to law school, real-estate school, or truck-driver school for that matter in order to set up the business.

Possible? Absolutely. Risk free? It depends.

A while back we explored the pyramid concept of business opportunity which, by definition, is a multi-level operation.

But multi-level is not a dirty word. Such opportunities, like anything else, should be analyzed from a non-emotional standpoint.

I recently reviewed a network marketing proposal for a client that I was truly impressed with. It involved the sale of over 5000 goods and services obtained through a clearing house which has been in business over 30 years. This clearing house, I later found out, has a standing policy of satisfaction guaranteed or 100% refund to the customer. Interesting. With a policy like that, how can you stay in business 30 years if you have a bunch of dissatisfied customers? It must be legitimate if it checks out.

The next question was the cost to get in. I was told it was around \$105 of which virtually all was product that the new business operator could use in his house. Annual renewal fees? \$18. Average profit margin? Turns out to be 30%, although some products were more and some were 15%.

By the way, you realize that if you stick one hand in boiling water and the other in the freezer, on the average you're comfortable, right? And everyone knows that the definition of a mathematician is a guy who drowned in a lake with an average depth of two feet!

Anyway, with all that aside, and given the minimal investment, it would appear that at 30% margin, one would have to sell \$350 worth of product to recoup the initial investment.

So how does one make money in this particular venture? By a combination of recruiting others into the business who place their orders through you, giving rise to monthly production bonuses based on volume, by selling "retail" to others, and by buying products the business has available for your own use at wholesale.

The proponents said and I verified that it requires 10-15 hours per week of part-time effort doing what the company suggests you do to build the business. Additionally, a large network of

See HORNER . . . on Page 12

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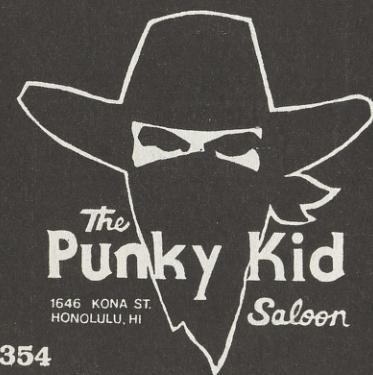
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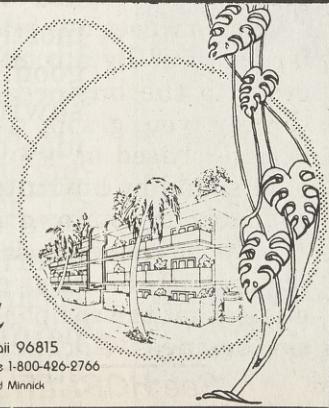
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PSYCHIC IMAGES

by Guru Pomah Yhohrundi

[The psychic images presented here are exactly what the title infers: Guru's mental images of the answers to questions asked by people who write in. Questions are answered as space permits. For a personal answer, mark your letter "personal" and send a SASE to Guru Yhohrundi, c/o Patlar, PO Box 22401,

Sacramento, CA 95822. You can also order Guru's book: *Epigrams on Being*, his observations on life's perplexing questions, \$8 postpaid anywhere in US., checks payable to Guru to above address.]

Dear Guru: Can you tell anything about dreams? I have been trying to dream the correct combination of numbers

for the state lottery, and asking other questions, so far without success. Sometimes I have weird dreams, sometimes funny dreams, but never anything useful. Maybe I need a dream book... R.G., Chicago.

Dear R.G.: Dreams are not something I have give a lot of attention to, but I'll tell you what I know. For a start, dreams are your connection to the Supreme Intelligence. (God, if you want to use that frame of reference). According to the Bible, God appeared to Moses in a dream, and to his wife, Zipporah (Ex. 4:25), although I think she gave it a pretty crazy interpretation, as people didn't know as much factual information about dreams in those days. God also appeared to Mary, telling her she was going to give birth to Jesus, and to her cousin, Elizabeth (mother of John the Baptist). God was just going around everywhere talking to these various people in dreams. Must've been something to it, as they went ahead and did what God said, and mostly it turned out pretty good. The inventor of the sewing machine got the idea of the eye through the pointed part of the needle in a dream where African aborigines were throwing spears with an "eye" in the point. There are many other modern cases. America's Walt Disney's "Cin-

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derella" has a song which goes: "A dream is a wish your heart makes . . ." This is true. Dreams are 5 types: 1. Wish fulfillment; 2. Entertainment; 3. To keep you asleep; 4. Prophetic; and 5. Answers to your problems (tells you what to do). I think of dreams as our connection to the Unlimited. Only you can decide what your dreams mean, for the same reason that only you know about your past lives--if any. Dreams are often told in symbols, and you can make up your own list of symbols and what they mean to you. After all, you are making up the dream (or you and God).--(P.S. Forget the lottery. You can make anything happen in your life by knowing what you want to happen and doing what your dreams tell you.)

Dear Guru: I have been told by a reincarnation psychic that I was once a pharaoh in Egypt, and one of the Caesars in Rome, and that I had at least a million lifetimes.--B.B., Memphis.

Dear B.B.: Makes no difference how many lifetimes you've had. Now is the important time. As the current lover is the best, the current play is the best, the current orgasm is the best. Past lives are a fact, but only useful for understanding your present lifetime,

and why you react and "emote" in certain circumstances, and why you like/love/hate some people you meet/know. (You've known them before.) The only person who can tell you what your past lives were, and/or how many, is you. If you're really serious, get with someone who can regress you (without the use of hypnosis), and you will remember--for whatever it's worth. Regarding the famous people you might

have been: They have to be somewhere, of course. They might be here now--you could be one of them--or they might be waiting for the right time to get another body. It makes no difference. It's like saying you are the cousin, or something, to the President or some other celebrity. Nobody cares about that. Who the hell are you? That's what's important. And what good are you doing now?

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HOROSCOPES

by Pat Larr, Sci. D.

PISCES (Feb 19-Mar 20): A brief vacation leads to romance on the road. You'll see sights you never dreamed of.

ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 19): That hot, potential prospect turns out to be not so hot after all. Focus your attention elsewhere for the time being.

TAURUS (Apr 20-May 20): An aging drag queen puts a bead on you this month. Don't muss your lipstick, honey.

GEMINI (May 21-Jun 20): A curly-haired Italian makes you weak in the knees. Darling, don't get your pants dirty. Get out the kneepads.

CANCER (Jun 21-Jul 22): This month a construction worker with a huge tool belt longs to build bigger and better things with you. Enjoy!

LEO (Jul 23-Aug 22): You've only seen him in a three-piece suit, but mid-month a mild-mannered co-worker digs his leather duds out of the closet for a look.

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sep 22): A passionate kiss with the wrong person at the wrong time could spell trouble for you and your special someone.

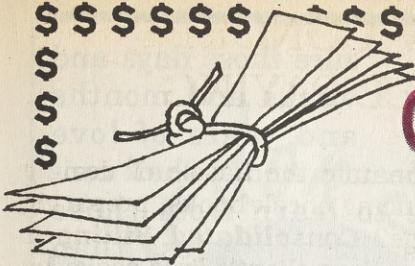
LIBRA (Sep 23-Oct 22): All of your friends start drooling over your newly-found love. Get to the bottom of this before they do.

SCORPIO (Oct 23-Nov 22): This month you have a brush with greatness in a public restroom. Your eyes won't be the only things bulging.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21): That special someone gets down on his knees and proposes. You'll be down on your knees too!

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 19): That straight guy with the girlfriend suddenly wants to get to know you a whole lot better. Give him a chance to get it out of his system.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20-Feb 18): A real loser develops a crush on you. Let him down easy. Concentrate on finances this month.



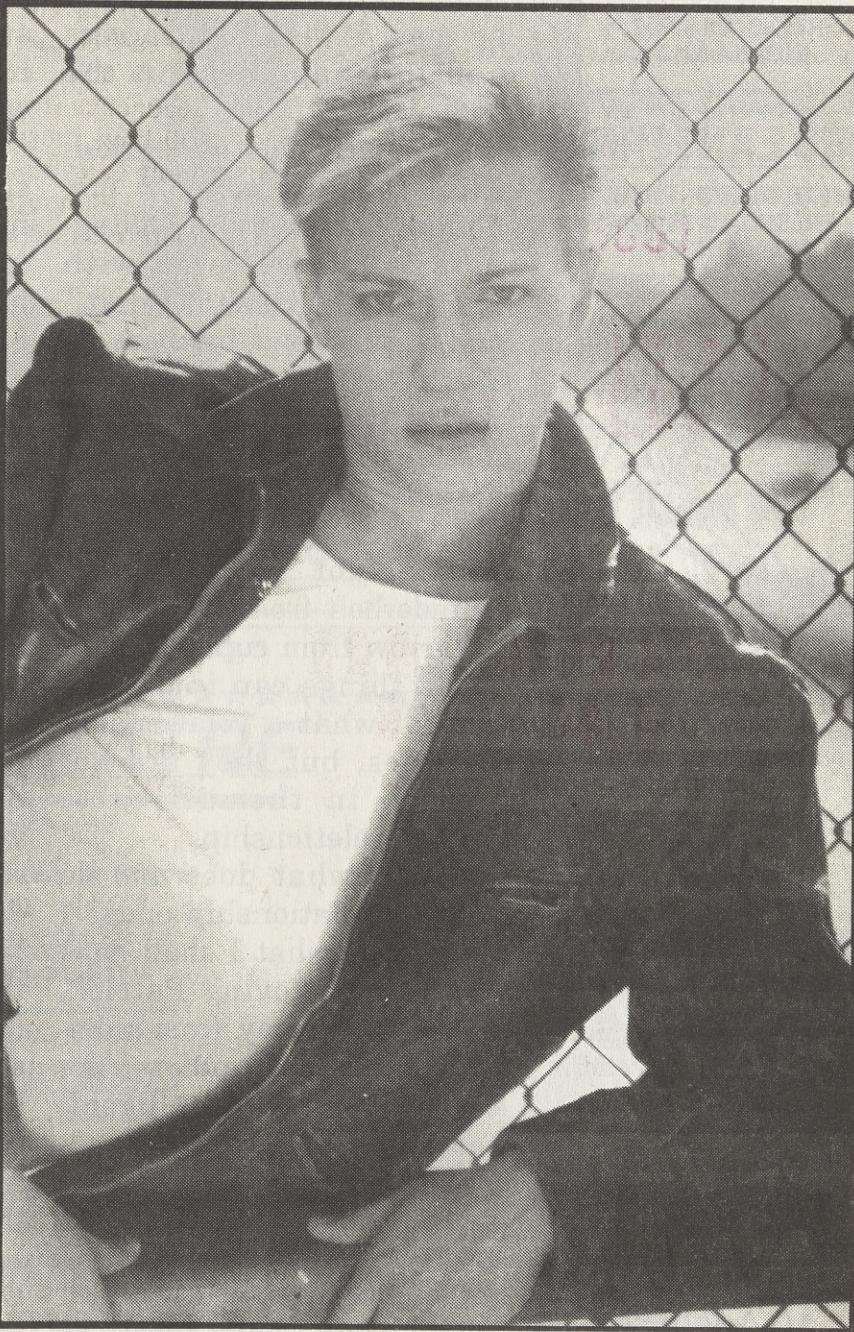
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haps--he can truly find love and romance and eternal wonder with someone with a different set of "givens"; a different set of "hidden parts." And, indeed he may! I wish him success and full happiness in the endeavor!

What then is a relationship? It is, it seems to me, nothing more than a willingness to choose to be with another, "no matter what," and to be chosen, by them, as someone they will be with no matter what. A relationship, then, is a choice, not a thunderbolt from the blue or an arrow from cupid--though those things can indeed be part of what a relationship includes, but they are not enough in themselves to make a relationship.

Then what does one do when a relationship ends? I only know what I shall do. I shall go on loving Patrick, but in a new way, from a distance. He was, and is, the most wonderful, intelligent, sensitive, beautiful, knowledgeable person I have ever known. He is, in fact, as near to being a "soul mate" as anyone I've ever known. I wish he had finally chosen to continue with me; I know there were to be wondrous and magical discoveries ahead for both of us. But he has chosen, and I respect and honor that choice.

I shall continue to trea-

MORE From Page 3

sure those days and weeks and months and years of love and beauty. And, I shall continue to learn from those times that were less than blissful. I am larger, and stronger, and more fully human for both kinds of time with Patrick.

Finally, as for myself, I shall go on. It's like that very first "insight" into Enlightenment I had, many years ago, having a drink in a New York bar on a quiet Sunday afternoon,

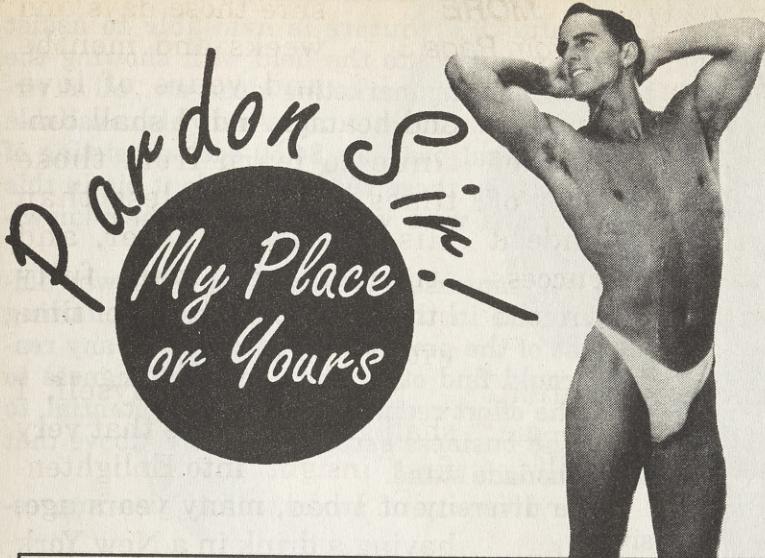
on my way back from delivering a friend to a new job in Vermont.

It was so crystal clear, and it was a true Enlightenment breakthrough.

"It's very simple," I said. "I simply get up off this barstool, walk out into the world, and live my life."

And, that is what I shall do--alone, or with a partner: I shall live my life. And, if the Universe chooses to send me another life-partner, I shall allow him to live his life as I live mine. And, we shall simply grow together. That is what it's all about, you know, this "earth-plane" existence: Learning! And, I might add, LOVING! But, that's really the same thing, isn't it?

[Ralph H. Walker is creator of The Loving Brotherhood and The ALL NEW YOU Experience. He welcomes your comments and questions and letters at PO Box 556, Sussex, NJ 07461.]



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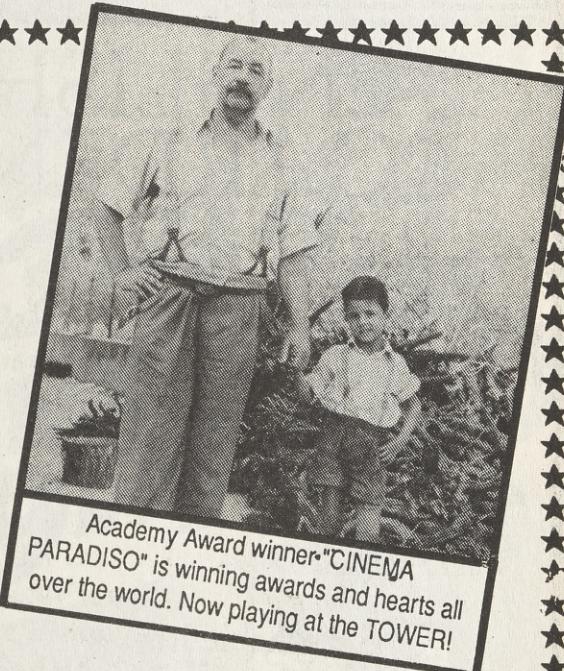
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successful distributors is available to assist newer entrants into the field with showing the program, sharing marketing ideas, etc., all at virtually no cost. Cassette tapes were also available on an optional basis for \$4.50 each consisting of talks given by those who had made it big in this business and were willing to share their knowledge.

I was impressed. It seems that those who didn't succeed in the business were not failing because of the product, the company, or any reason I could find other than an unwillingness to exert the effort required, which is substantial, to make the business succeed at a level above that of a lemonade stand.

The diversity of products was also impressive.

Another one we are looking at isn't quite so high on my list of recommended ventures. This second opportunity strikes me as more of a wholesale-buying club. It is a company that is less than ten years old and operates in a very few states. The concept here is that of "discount buying club" where you get kickbacks on purchases made from cooperating stores and merchants. There are kickbacks on airline flights, on telephone services and other services offered.

This second company also offers an early mortgage pay-off program as we discussed a few months ago where you pay THEM 1/2 of your monthly house payment twice a month, but you pay an additional sum so as to pay the mortgage off early, they forward it to your mortgage company once a month, and in 20 years your house is paid for. Assuming they do what they promise. No one is supervising this operation, by the way.

Also, the kickbacks/discounts you get for your wholesale-buying efforts are not paid to you directly but instead go into a bank back east and are available to you only after there is \$250 sitting in the pot in your name. Naturally, the company gets the benefit of a huge float each month for all the members who have less than this sum available to them. What happens to that money?

We're still checking this one out, by the way. I will report in upcoming editions as to my final analysis which, along with 50 cents, will get you a cup of coffee at Denny's.

In closing, let me hit you with a well-worn phrase that I wish more people would heed: Before you invest, call the Better Business Bureau, call your attorney, and call your accountant.

Next month: Buying a business. Points to consider. Two months hence: Lemons in the car industry--how to make lemonade at the manufacturer's expense and at virtually no cost to you!



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Late in 1981 the story broke that a new disease was attacking gay men in Los Angeles and New York. At that time, nobody knew that there was a disease later to be known as AIDS, that it was caused by a virus, or that it would reach epidemic proportions. In fact, after the first person with AIDS died in Los Angeles, his physician was quoted as saying, "We'll never see anything like that again."

Of course (and tragically) he was wrong. Over the next several months, it became apparent that AIDS (even though it did not yet have a name) was getting worse instead of better, that the numbers of people being affected were growing exponentially, and that unless something was done fairly quickly, the gay community (as well as the Haitian community) faced decimation.

As a journalist, one of the things I found most fascinating about the early years of the epidemic was the manner in which this new disease was handled by the mainline press. In 1981, when AIDS was still being referred to as GRID (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency), the assumption was that this new thing was a gay disease. Think back with me to what conditions were like in 1981:

Gay people have never been well thought of by mainline America, but in 1981, after two decades of organization and hard work, American attitudes were beginning to soften. State after state had repealed sodomy statutes; Wisconsin and a host of municipal governments had enacted comprehensive gay-rights legislation. In terms of popularity with the man in the street (whom I've never had the pleasure of meeting), gay people still ranked somewhere between Moonies and the Internal Revenue Service, but attitudes were definitely softening.

Then suddenly word was out that a new disease had hit the gay community. Of course, we were several weeks and maybe a hundred cases into it before the medical community decided that this was, in fact, a new disease. There was also initial confusion generated over the determination that Haitians, in addition to gay people, were at risk of getting the



IN MY OPINION

by Mel Dahl

disease. Nevertheless, with a name like GRID, the epidemic was firmly fixed in the public's mind as a gay disease.

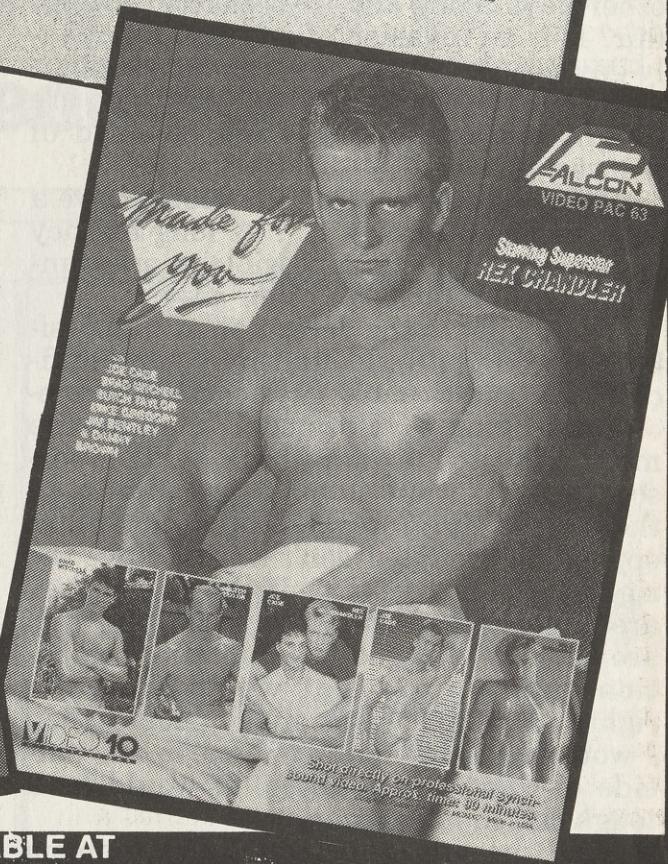
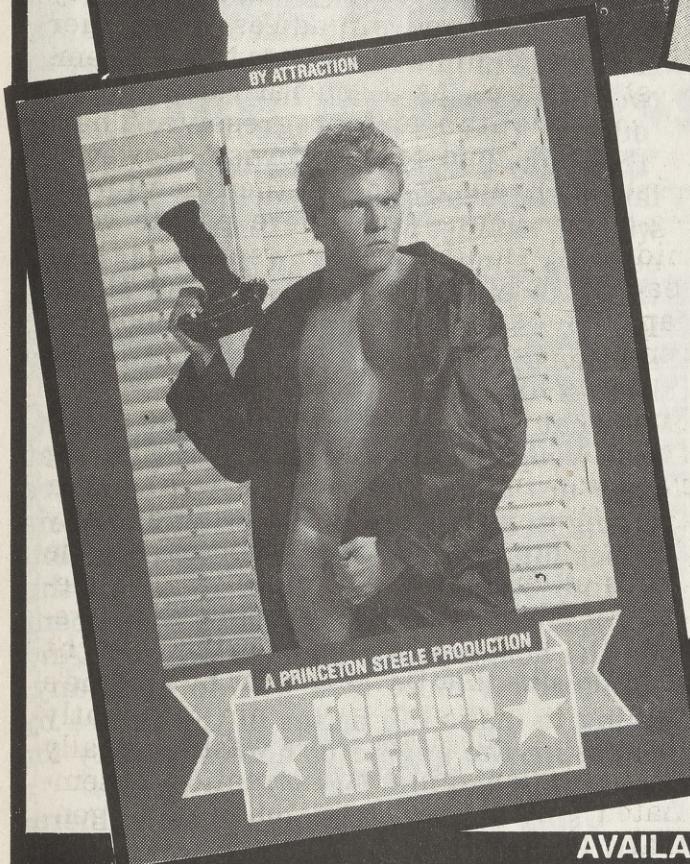
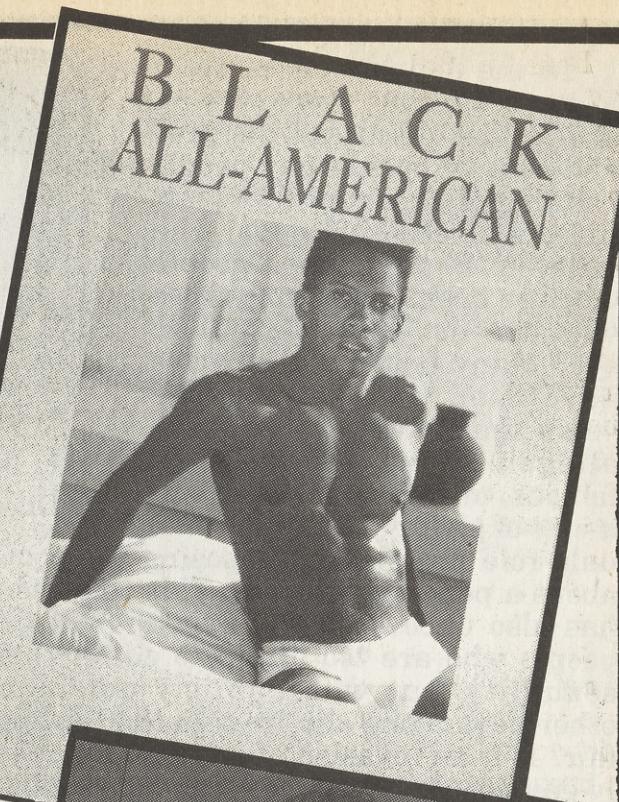
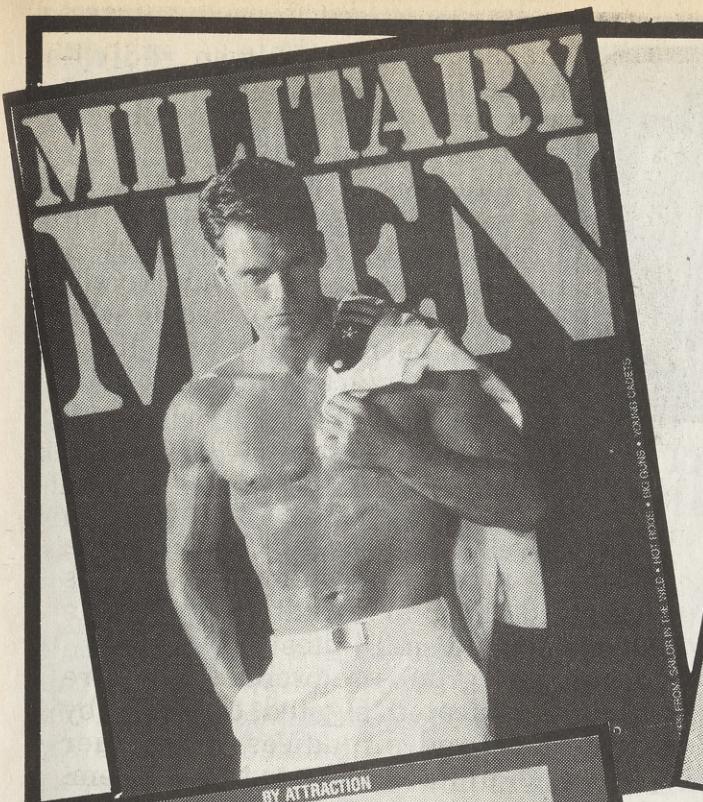
Thus, what gay people were confronted with was that for the first time in recent memory a natural disaster had selectively singled out a group of people who had not been terribly well liked in the first place. The public attitudes, which had been softening, had not softened nearly enough to resist an immediate, although temporary, return to previous levels of intolerance, with a little help from a collection of idiotic preachers who assured the public that this was the wrath of God on a sinful lifestyle.

Editors as a group are probably no more or no less uneducated, bigoted, or driven by their passions and prejudices than other people, which in this case was the problem. Most big cities, as a general rule, tend to be cosmopolitan and progressive. Their newspapers tend to be likewise. However, most Americans do not get their news from big-city papers. Many more people read mid- and small-sized newspapers than read big-city papers, and a lot of those papers tend to be far from cosmopolitan and progressive.

I was living in a small town in Middle America when AIDS stories first began to break, and I have an impressive clipping collection from that era. The local paper had some editorial problems where gay issues were concerned. It opposed, in the words of one editorial, any "efforts to elevate the moral status of sodomites." In re-reading today what was written eight years ago in that paper which, by anyone's standards, was anti-gay, I am pleasantly surprised to note that there wasn't actually that much outright misinformation disseminated. Rather, the paper followed its general policy of not reporting "gay news" unless there was a particular story of such magnitude (like a health crisis) that it could no longer be ignored, and then reminding the readers ad nauseum that this was a "gay disease."

When it was discovered that AIDS was caused by a virus whose preferred method of transmission appeared to be anal inter-

Please see OPINION on Page 29



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In the January 29 issue of *Time* magazine, there was an article that discussed the pros and cons of openly gay people pointing their out-of-the-closet fingers at closeted gays. The issue is: Should those people who are openly gay force those who are not into the public eye? Many books and articles have been written over the years that have "exposed" the alleged homosexuality of famous, or infamous, people as a way of giving young homosexuals role models and exposing the truth about a person's behavior. This treatment has also uncovered the hypocrisy of gay people who are too afraid to admit their sexuality, but who publicly denounce other gays along the way. Is the "outing" fair? Is it an invasion of privacy? Do openly gay people have a right or responsibility to "out" other gays? The questions are tough, but increasingly are in need of answering.

My personal view is that people have a right to their privacy . . . as long as they are not making life impossible or substantially more difficult for other gays.

Now, what is the definition of "impossible or making life substantially more difficult?" Should closeted gays consider someone not being a role model "making life more difficult?" I don't think so. If a person does not want to hold their life up to the intense scrutiny of the press and other opposition groups, I don't think I have the right to force them to. If, however, they are gay political or religious leaders and are actively engaged in promoting legislation and policies that would limit the rights and expressions of gay people, then I would consider nailing them to the outside of their closet doors. It would be a tough call in any situation.

And then there's the delicate problem of what suffices as a definition of "limiting rights?" Inaction or opposition regarding AIDS or AIDS-rights legislation? Promoting a ban on homosexuals as teachers? Teaching that homosexuality is a sickness or sin? It seems to me that any difference in opinion regarding AIDS and homosexual rights might open up people for "outing." You can see how this issue is extremely sticky in any form.



THE NEXT WAVE

by Douglas N. Lewis

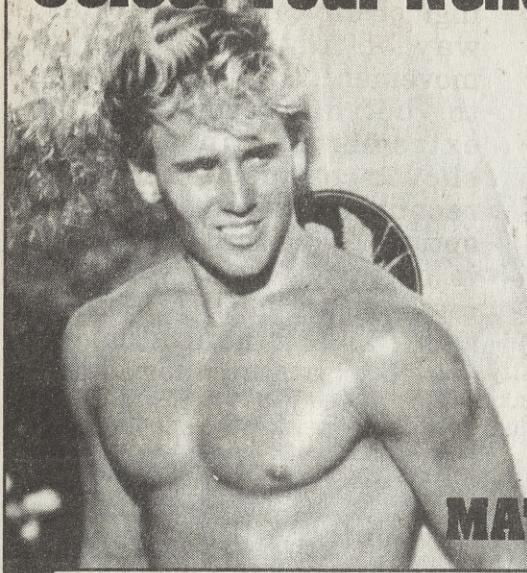
There are those radicals who would advocate the "outing" of any and all gays as a way of furthering the gay movement. That seems to me to be dangerous in the extreme. I think "outing" should be used as a last recourse when all other options have failed, and then in only very narrow parameters. All the more reason why we need an organization that can play the watchdog to these kinds of issues. If the gay community would get together and move as one voice, "outing" may not be necessary in any form.

That Representative Barney Frank threatened to expose fellow gays in the Congress and then backed down when his political opponents backed down is an indication of how powerful such a weapon could be. I agree with his assessment of "outing," that he would use it only against "those gay people who shamefully use the fact or accusation of homosexuality as a weapon against others." Otherwise, closeted gays should be left in peace. It's one thing to possibly sacrifice your career, family, and life for the sake of gay rights; it's something else again to sacrifice the lives of others.

That gays are using "outing" as a political weapon is interesting to me in that they are using the very stigma they are trying to abolish as a way of forcing their opponents' hands. What a bizarre position to find ourselves in. What about all the time, energy, and money that's been spent on the homosexual's right to privacy? And what about those who will do most anything to make life better in the future by exposing the stigma of homosexuality for what it is, lies and fear and ignorance?

Using a person through their vulnerabilities in order to make your political point is short sighted and shows a distinct lack of values on the part of the finger pointer. We've seen many examples of these kinds of political mud-slinging tactics (witness the 1988 presidential election). Everyone comes away sullied somehow, even though a person may win their immediate goals. It's a tough issue, but one that bears careful consideration and debate. Where do you stand?

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ERNIE BROWN
VIEWS FROM RIVER CITY

By now your fancy should already have turned to "whatever" because spring is here in all its glory . . . March had its moments. One of the hi-lites was the 15th Annual Kamp Awards held at Joe's Town and Country. This had to be the best one ever entertainment-wise, time-wise, and fun-wise. Congrats to Jim Piscuita for a job well done . . . Also during March I had the pleasure of reviewing a musical called "Crazy Rhythms" at the Old Eagle Theater in Old Sac, featuring several of our community. Such sets, created by Jim Berset! This revue takes you through the twenties, thirties, and the forties. A Must See, which is playing thru April 21st . . . Russian River is beginning to come alive for the season. I was there a couple of weeks ago and stayed at one of my favorite places, The Highlands, one of the most enjoyable and comfortable resorts there, especially if you love redwood trees . . . Congrats to John Deere for his literary contribution to our community called "The Bar-e \$ene".

Now sit back and relax because the month of April is going to be a busy one and one of the hi-lites will be "Coronation 90" produced by GNIE, Inc. The theme for this year's coronation is "A Trip Down The Nile." Don't miss this, one of the biggest events of the year for the Court System. Congrats to Empress Stacey & Emperor Paul for a wonderful year. Here are some of the events leading up to the coronation: April 18, Emperor & Empress Last Royal Bingo at the Merk starting at 7 PM; April 19 at the Merk, the Imperial Roast & In-Town Party, 8 til 10 PM; April 20, "The Imperial Out of Town Show" at Joseph's Town & Country, starting at 10PM. Then the big one: April 21, The Coronation!!! Hold on, it's not over yet. The following day, April 22, the Victory Brunch and awards for the New Empress of Sacramento at the Bull Market located at 815 11th St., 11 AM, \$15 per person including tax & tip . . . LaKish is doing it again. That's right, another big auction at the Merk April 15, proceeds toward the Sacramento Quilt Display. LaKish needs items for auction, so check your basement. Remember, your junk may be someone's masterpiece . . . The Townhouse is now open seven days a week for you convenience. They are planning a special Easter Brunch, starting at 10 AM thru 4 PM. Also new: Sunday nite dinners. Watch for a new artist, Jimmy George, whose works will be appearing upstairs at the Townhouse, check for dates . . . Wait until you see what Mr. Sidee has done to Faces; you're going to like the renovations . . . The Wreck Room is still full to capacity for those Sunday pigouts . . . Shirley at the Buffalo is still trying to get a liquor license--hang in there, Shirley . . . I hate to have to say it again, but I must. The bars are here for your enjoyment, for socializing, for getting together. Not for bickering & fighting or backbiting. These are your meeting places. Don't cut off the hands that feed you, so to speak. The bottom line is: If you act like ladies & gentlemen, you will be treated like ladies & gentlemen. Otherwise the bar owners have informed me that you'll be kicked out, with no possibilities of returning. Food for thought . . . Have a nice Easter.

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series of task forces. Different organizations took the lead on different task forces. For example, the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems head the Civil Rights task force. The American Psychological Association and the American Public Health Association lead the Prevention task force, the AAC and the American Nurses Association co-chair the Care task force, and the Human Rights Campaign Fund and the American Foundation for AIDS Research lead the Research task force. All the task forces work together on the appropriations process, with AAC providing lead coordination to ensure that money for each of the different policy areas is appropriated by Congress.

For 99% of NORA members, AIDS is only a small piece of their group's agendas. The AAC, therefore, which organizes NORA's monthly meetings, helps members write newsletter articles that will educate their members, and helps them draft board positions and policy papers on AIDS. The AAC also coordinates lobbying days, sending member representatives in strategic groups, so that, for example, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force lobbyist will show up with representatives from the American Nurses Association and the Junior League.

Diversity, mainstreaming, and practical arguments have been useful political strategies for the AIDS lobby. As always, the game on the Hill follows rule number one: Make an issue sufficiently palatable for the folks back home so representatives will not be afraid to vote for good policy on the issue. The respectability of NORA members is useful for members of Congress, who are sometimes jumpy at the thought of being accused of being "gay sympathizers" if they simply vote for decent public policy on AIDS.

There have been some interesting, useful side effects to the NORA coalition. Because NORA's respectability is lending a good deal of credibility to what had been seen as a gay issue (even though AIDS is not exclusively a

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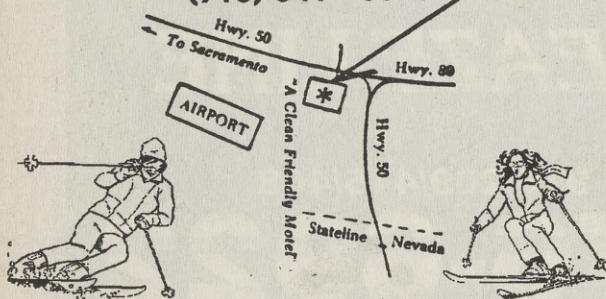
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gay disease), that credibility is rubbing off, to some extent, on lesbian/gay member groups. They are being associated, in Hill politics, with a powerful coalition, rather than being seen as an isolated civil-rights group. This heightened visibility will hopefully benefit us as we work for a lesbian/gay civil-rights bill. The more open and known lesbian and gay groups are on the Hill, the less they will be feared and stigmatized.

On the flip side, all NORA member group representatives are getting an important education about lesbians and gay groups and individuals, and this is building important

*** A * I * D * S ***

bridges. Hopefully, this contact will become a support base for future work on lesbian and gay issues on the Hill, as well as help start changing national attitudes about lesbians and gays.

Perhaps the greatest contribution NORA has made to the lesbian and gay community is that it has freed those groups from focusing all their attention on AIDS. Before NORA, those groups were often the only ones working on AIDS issues, and the fight was so intense it was hard to put resources into anything else. Now those players are able to work on other issues of importance to the community, while still working on AIDS as part of the NORA coalition.

But if NORA has a weakness, it is that it has not developed roots in local communities. Tom Sheridan of the AAC says he would like to see local NORAs (LORAs?) made up of parents, doctors, religious leaders, gay-rights and civil-rights activists, teachers, social service clubs, and others who would become active in towns and cities so that members of Congress would get the message that their constituents care about AIDS and want a response from the federal government. The current AIDS complacency--ironic, since 1.5 million Americans are HIV infected and 120,000 have AIDS--must be shattered by grass-roots recognition of the need for resources to cure and care for those who have the disease and to protect others against its spread.

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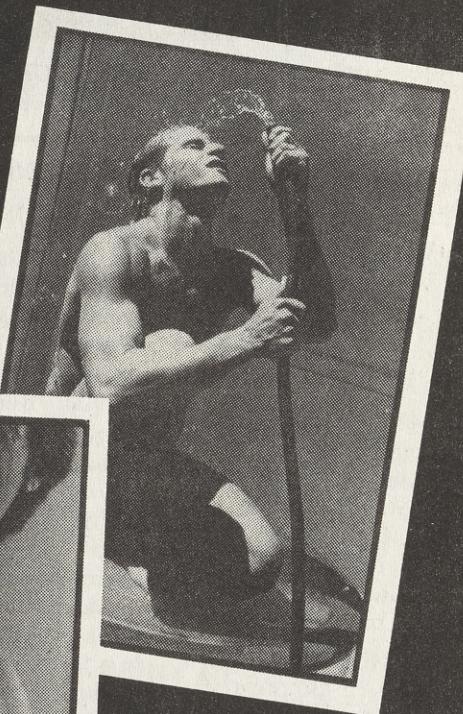
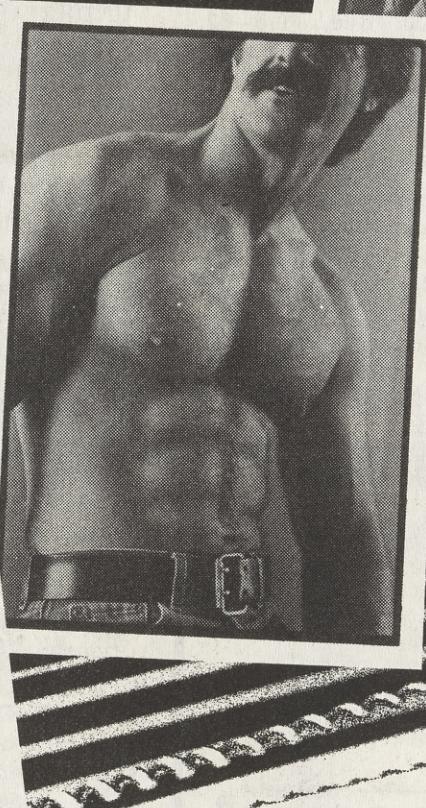
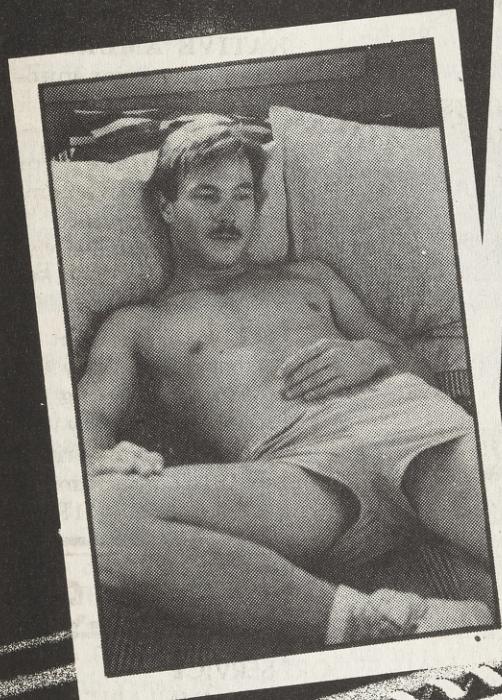
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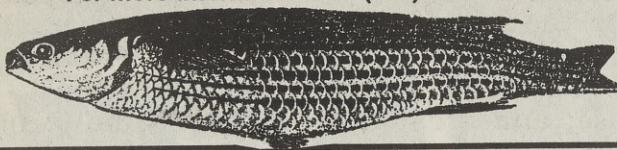
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course, suddenly the focus of attention shifted to the sex lives of gay men. Now, I have a confession to make. Pre-AIDS, I used to go to the tubs. Not often by the mores then in effect (perhaps once in six months, and then primarily when I was on the road), but I did go. I always thought the baths were really neat because they were almost like a secret society, a secret organization, a secret club, something we had that the rest of the world didn't know about. Not unlike Mormon temple services.

It has always been a little disappointing to me that this thing which was special because it was private suddenly found its way to national newsmagazines, along with statements by assorted fundamentalist idiots that the average gay male has 10,000 different sex partners in the course of a lifetime. (When I read that figure, I did some math to figure out how far behind schedule I was. It was depressing.)

Anyway, for about six months, until everyone got tired of the story, the crisis to weather was the public indignity (as expressed by the same fundies referred to above) about the promiscuity of gay men.

OPINION
From Page 14

Then, a light began to appear at the end of the tunnel, and the focus of the reportage shifted once more to new treatments being developed. For the last three years or so, the main story has been: HOPE. Great advances have been made toward controlling the disease, and great advances continue to be made.

Now that there is no longer any basis for a fear that gay people are about to bring this plague on the rest of society, attitudes have begun to soften once more. As my friend and fellow columnist Paul Varnell pointed out in the *Windy City Times*, that which does not kill us makes us stronger. The real story is how a community, devastated by a disease, has come together as one and continued to march forward.

From the standpoint of the press, the story of how the story was reported is a story of how the mainline press is run by human beings with a genuine human nature. Sometimes that nature is bigoted, prejudiced, and stupid; at other times it is compassionate and responsible. It can also be educated and sensitized.

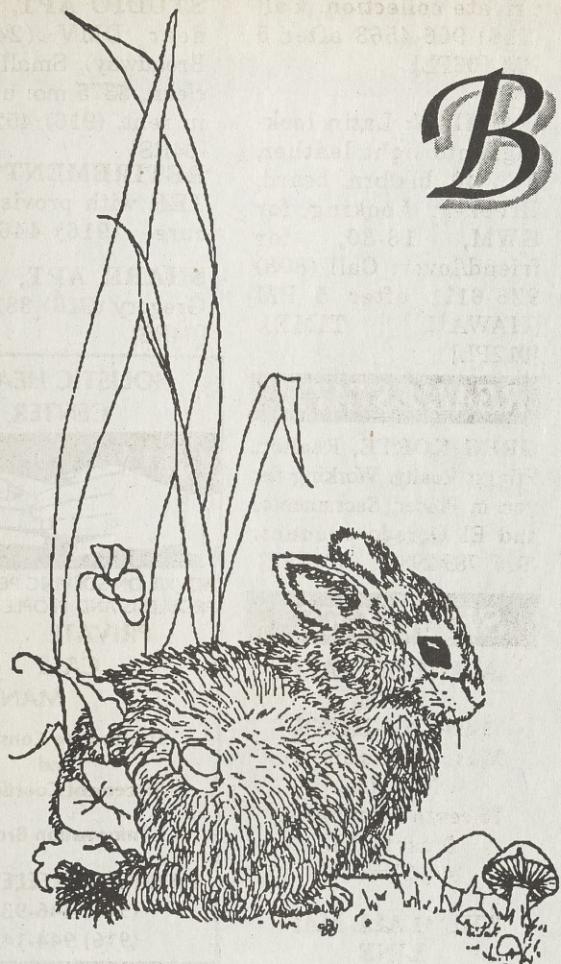
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